

Songo Mnara



Mosque



Trail entrance



Walking trail

Baobab Trees

These trees are often found in Swahili archaeological sites. This may be because they like to live in soil used by people. Can you get your arms in a hug around a baobab?

Funerary Mosque

This graveyard is the resting place of a 14th century holy man to whom the local people still pray. Look out for offerings, but please leave anything you find where it is!

Stone Stairs

Take a seat, relax, and drink some water. The benches outside the door were a place for family and friends to gather and talk.



↑ Visitor's Shelter & WC



Friday Mosque

Imagine how many candles it would take to light up rooms this big. Carved cut-outs in the walls held tiny, flickering oil lamps. Can you find at least three openings for these lamps?

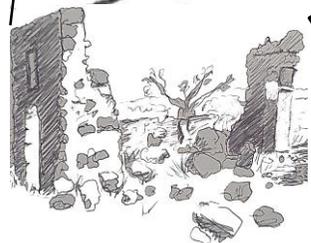
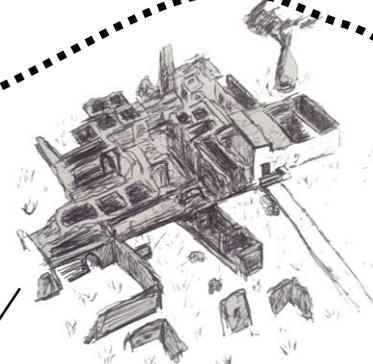


Stone Houses

A long time ago, when these buildings were new, big mangrove trees were cut down to hold the roofs. Can you see the holes that held them?

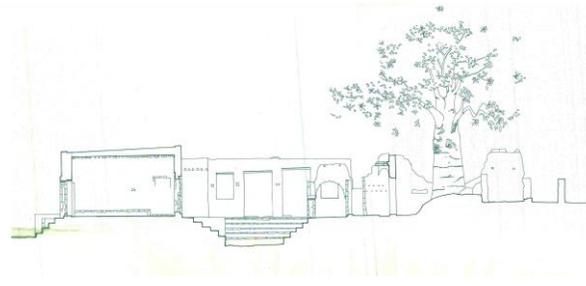
Palace

In the past, the walls were painted bright white and covered with fabric tapestries. You can still see the holes they hung from. Can you find one of these holes?



Do you see the coconut trees? Locals are responsible for planting and caring for them. You may even be able to get a fresh coconut - yum!

Make sure you visit the village, where the locals can show you traditional crafts and farming techniques they use today.



Remember the residents of Songo Mnara value this island as their home. When you visit the area, please treat it with care.

Say hello to the locals whenever you see them. "Shikamoo!" for elders. "Mambo!" for juniors.

Feel free to photograph the ruins but ask before photographing people and houses.

Dress to show your respect all the time. Cover your shoulders and legs.

During Ramadan, the fasting season, ask your tour guide for a private place to eat.

Keep the site clean!

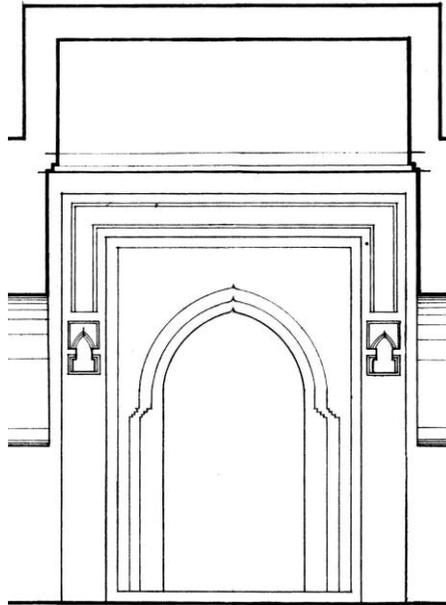
What you need to know before your visit.

Get your permit to visit the site at the Antiquities Office near the harbor.

You must bring your own water. It's not available on the island. Consider asking your tour guide to arrange food on the island with the locals.

Toilets are near the Visitor's Shelter.

Watch your step. The trails can be uneven.



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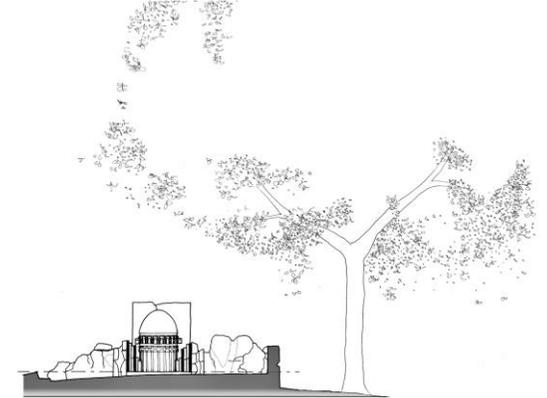


Special thanks to

- Antiquities Division of Tanzania
- Kilwa Islands Tours
- Village Ruins Committee of Songo Mnara

Songo Mnara UNESCO World Heritage Site

Welcome to Songo Mnara! This special Swahili town was originally a burial ground and holy place for the residents of Kilwa Kisiwani. It grew into one of the most elegant towns on the East African Coast in the 15th century.



As you wander around the ruins of Songo Mnara, you can explore

- Dozens of houses that give you a sense of everyday life in the 15th century.
- The "Palace" house, which is not really a palace, just a fancier merchant's home!
- The Friday Mosque with one of the most elaborate mihrabs on the Swahili Coast.

The island is also home to outstanding natural features like

- Caves and coral formations between the ruins and the village.
- Mangrove forests to wade through.
- Rock hyraxes and monkeys that climb the ruins.